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FROM THE MAGAZINE RACK NO. 88
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OUR AMERICA: A SELF-PORTRAIT AT TWO HUNDRED
(NEWSWEEK)
HOW SAFE IS SAFE ENOUGH? (NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE)

ANNCR: HERE IS -----, WITH FROM THE MAGAZINE RACK, A REVIEW OF ARTICLES ON TIMELY TOPICS FROM MAGAZINES PUBLISHED IN THE UNITED STATES. TODAY, A SELF-PORTRAIT OF AMERICA DRAWN BY SOME OF ITS CITIZENS FOR NEWSWEEK MAGAZINE, ON THE NATION'S TWO-HUNDREDTH BIRTHDAY...AND, A LOOK AT THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE SAFETY OF NUCLEAR REACTORS USED TO SUPPLY DOMESTIC ENERGY, FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES...

EDITOR: THE TWO-HUNDREDTH BIRTHDAY OF THE UNITED STATES HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF THOUSANDS OF ARTICLES IN RECENT MONTHS... FROM HISTORICAL REVIEWS OF THE NATION'S ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT, TO PROJECTIONS ON WHAT THE COUNTRY'S PAST WILL LEAD TO IN THE FUTURE. IN PUBLISHING ITS BICENTENNIAL ISSUE, NEWSWEEK MAGAZINE FOCUSES ON THE PRESENT -- WHERE THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES SEE THEIR COUNTRY STANDING AT THIS MOMENT IN HISTORY. AND THE PEOPLE QUOTED BY THE MAGAZINE ARE A DIVERSE LOT, A RANDOMLY CHOSEN COLLECTION OF INDIVIDUALS FROM BOTH THE MAINSTREAM AND THE BACKWASH OF AMERICAN SOCIETY. WRITING ABOUT THE PEOPLE INTERVIEWED, NEWSWEEK SAYS:

VOICE: "THEY LIVE FOR THE MOST PART IN MATERIAL PLENTY, AND BELIEVE IT TO BE THE REWARD OF HARD WORK. THEY FEEL THEIR LIVES ARE BETTER THAN THEIR PARENTS'; THEY ARE STRUGGLING IN TURN TO MAKE THEIR CHILDREN'S LIVES BETTER YET. THEY HAVE NOT LOST HEART. THEIR VOICES CONFIRM THAT THE AMERICAN

VOICE: EXPERIMENT IS INCOMPLETE -- PAINFULLY SO FOR THE POOR, FOR
(CONT) MINORITIES, FOR WOMEN. THEY REFLECT CONCERN FOR A LOSS OF
TRUST IN EVERYTHING FROM FAMILY LIFE TO POLITICS... AND YET
THEIR ONENESS IS MORE POWERFUL STILL. WE ARE, THE NOVELIST
JOHN CHEEVER SAYS, A NATION 'HAUNTED BY A DREAM OF
EXCELLENCE.'

EDITOR: WE HAVE NOT YET DESPAIRED OF MAKING THE DREAM COME TRUE."
AMONG THE MORE POWERFUL AMERICANS INTERVIEWED FOR THE
ARTICLE, IS UNITED STATES ATTORNEY GENERAL EDWARD LEVI.
THE NATION'S TOP LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER, MISTER LEVI -- A
FORMER UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT -- BELIEVES THAT DESPITE WATER-
GATE, THE NATION REMAINS STRONG.

VOICE: "I THINK WHAT IS RIGHT ABOUT THE COUNTRY, IN THE FIRST
PLACE, IS THE ENORMOUS FREEDOM AND LIBERTY, WHICH, IF YOU
COMPARE IT WITH ANY OTHER COUNTRY AT ANY OTHER TIME, IS
STRIKING. THE WILLINGNESS TO LOOK AT OUR PROBLEMS --
ALTHOUGH SOMETIMES WE'RE NOT FULLY WILLING TO DO IT -- IS
ON THE PLUS SIDE. AND OUR ULTIMATE FAITH IN THE INDIVIDUAL
IS ONE THE PLUS SIDE. NOTHING THAT I'VE SAID (HOWEVER)
IS MEANT TO DENY THAT WE HAVE ENORMOUS PROBLEMS, BECAUSE
WE OBVIOUSLY DO. WE HAVE TERRIBLE PROBLEMS IN OUR CITIES...
I GUESS NOBODY PROMISED US THAT WE WOULDN'T. I JUST THINK
WE ARE PREPARED TO RECOGNIZE THEM. AND TO REALIZE THAT
NOT ALL OF THEM CAN BE SOLVED, WHICH IN ITSELF IS A
RATHER CONSIDERABLE ACHIEVEMENT."

EDITOR: THE CONSIDERABLE JOB OF TACKLING -- AND SOLVING -- SOME OF THE MORE DIFFICULT PROBLEMS FACING THE UNITED STATES IS THE SUBJECT OF MANY OF THE INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED BY NEWSWEEK -- INCLUDING ONE WITH THOMAS MURPHY, CHAIRMAN OF GENERAL MOTORS, WHO SAYS HIS LIFE HAS TAUGHT HIM THAT HARD WORK IS THE ONLY ANSWER TO THE DILEMMAS THE COUNTRY FACES.

VOICE: "THE ONLY THING THAT CONCERNED ME ABOUT THIS COUNTRY IS THAT PEOPLE SOMETIMES HAVE THE DELUSION THAT SOMEHOW THE GOOD LORD RAISED HIS ARMS AND SAID, 'THERE IT IS -- AMERICA, THE LAND OF OPPORTUNITY,' AND GAVE US SOMETHING MORE THAN HE GAVE EVERYBODY ELSE. HE DIDN'T. I THINK THE SYSTEM HAS DONE THAT FOR US. A LOT OF PEOPLE SWEATED AND STRAINED FOR A LONG TIME TO MAKE AMERICA WHAT IT IS TODAY, AND WE CAN IMPROVE ON IT -- IF WE WORK AT IT."

EDITOR: BUT NOT ALL THOSE INTERVIEWED BY THE MAGAZINE SEE WORK AND THE STRENGTH OF THE INDIVIDUAL AS THE ANSWERS TO ALL OF THE COUNTRY'S SOCIAL PROBLEMS. VIRGINIA EVANS, A WASHINGTON D.C. RESIDENT WHO IS UNABLE TO WORK AND DEPENDS ON GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE -- AND WHO IS ALSO BLACK -- EXPRESSES BITTERNESS ABOUT THE SYSTEM, SAYING THAT TOO MUCH MONEY IS WASTED IN THE AMERICAN ECONOMY, AND NOT ENOUGH SPENT TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE POOR. NEVERTHELESS, SHE SEES SIGNS OF PROGRESS -- AND OF HOPE.

VOICE: "I THINK ONE DAY THINGS WILL BE BETTER. I DON'T KNOW WHEN THAT DAY IS GOING TO COME, THOUGH. IT IS A LITTLE BETTER FOR ME THAN IT WAS FOR MY MOTHER, BECAUSE MY MOTHER

VOICE: (CONT) DIDN'T REALLY HAVE IT TOO GOOD WITH THE FIVE CHILDREN SHE WAS RAISING...SHE HAD TWO FINISH HIGH SCHOOL. I WAS LUCKY ENOUGH TO SEE BOTH MINE THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL AND BOTH INTO COLLEGE. SO YES, IT HAS BEEN A LITTLE BIT BETTER, BUT THEN YOU HAVE TO FIGHT FOR THAT TOO...MY DAUGHTER'S TRYING HER BEST NOW TO FINISH COLLEGE. BUT WHERE'S THE JOBS? MY SON DID A YEAR AND A HALF OF COLLEGE, AND HE'S PARKING CARS. IT'S BECAUSE OF THE JOB SHORTAGE -- HE JUST TOOK THE FIRST THING HE COULD GET. WHY SHOULD HE DO A YEAR AND A HALF OF COLLEGE AND END UP PARKING CARS? IT MAY BE THAT MY DAUGHTER MAY BE WASTING HER TIME GOING TO COLLEGE. SHE MAY HAVE TO GO ON WELFARE TOO."

EDITOR: FOR THE BLACK AMERICAN, THE BICENTENNIAL HAS MANY MEANINGS -- AND SOME BLACKS HOLD THE CONVICTION THAT FOR THEM, THE DESCENDANTS OF FORMER SLAVES, SUCH ANNIVERSARIES HAVE NO MEANING AT ALL. THIS PHENOMENON WAS DISCUSSED IN NEWSWEEK'S INTERVIEW WITH URBAN LEAGUE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR VERNON JORDAN.

VOICE: "TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO, WE WERE A NATION IN SLAVERY. A YOUNG NATION, BUT A NATION IN SLAVERY. WE HAD AN INCREDIBLE KIND OF CONTRADICTION, AND THAT WAS THAT THE VERY MAN WHO WROTE THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE (THOMAS JEFFERSON) WAS THE SAME FELLOW WHO OWNED SLAVES. SO IF YOU LOOK AT WHERE WE WERE TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO, OBVIOUSLY WE'RE NOT IN SLAVERY ANY MORE. AND NOBODY IN THEIR RIGHT MIND, LOOKING AT RACE RELATIONS IN AMERICA TODAY AND COMPARING IT TO EVEN TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, CAN ARGUE THAT THERE

VOICE: HAS NOT BEEN UNPRECEDENTED PROGRESS...BUT IT'S ALSO
(CONT) CLEAR THAT THERE IS STILL ONE STANDARD, ONE SET OF RULES
FOR BLACKS IN THIS COUNTRY, AND ANOTHER FOR WHITES. IF
WE'VE DONE ALL THE OTHER THINGS WE'VE DONE, WE COULD
HAVE SOLVED THIS PROBLEM. BUT WE HAVEN'T, AND WHAT IS
BASICALLY LACKING IS THE WILL TO DO IT..."

EDITOR: MISTER JORDAN'S SENTIMENTS -- THAT MUCH HAS BEEN DONE, BUT
THERE'S STILL MORE TO DO TO CORRECT THE PROBLEMS OF
DISCRIMINATION -- ARE SIMILAR TO THOSE OF FRANK RIVERA
FLORES, A MEXICAN-AMERICAN FARM WORKER IN SOUTHERN
CALIFORNIA WHO IS CRITICAL OF THE SYSTEM THAT DEMANDS LONG
HARD HOURS IN THE FIELDS FOR WHAT HE BELIEVES IS INSUFFICIENT
PAY. BUT MISTER RIVERA -- AN ACTIVE LABOR UNION ORGANIZER
-- ALSO BELIEVES THAT THE SYSTEM PROVIDES METHODS FOR CHANGE
AND IMPROVEMENT, AND THAT SUCH METHODS CAN BE PUT TO WORK.

VOICE: "THE WHOLE THING (THAT IS) RIGHT ABOUT AMERICA IS THAT YOU
O CAN WORK WITHIN THE SYSTEM TO CHANGE IT AND CORRECT ITS
P WRONGS INSTEAD OF GOING OUT AND DOING SOMETHING -- A VIOLENT
T ACTION -- TO MAKE A CHANGE. YOU CAN DO IT. IT JUST TAKES
TIME AND A LOT OF ENERGY. BUT YOU KNOW YOU CAN DO IT,
IF YOU WANT TO DO IT HARD ENOUGH."

EDITOR: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM IS
A SUBJECT DISCUSSED BY SEVERAL OF THOSE INTERVIEWED BY
NEWSWEEK, INCLUDING JOHN BEHAN, A MARINE CORPS VETERAN
WHO LOST BOTH LEGS IN VIETNAM -- BUT WHO IS NOW MAKING
A SUCCESSFUL CAREER IN LOCAL POLITICS IN NEW YORK STATE.
MISTER BEHAN SAYS HE BELIEVES THE SOCIAL UNREST THAT

EDITOR: ACCOMPANIED THE VIETNAM WAR AND THE WATERGATE SCANDAL
(CONT) HAS NOW PASSED -- AND THAT THE NATION IS READY TO TACKLE PROBLEMS AND MAKE SOCIAL PROGRESS.

VOICE: "VIETNAM WAS A BIG BLACK EYE, AND WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO STAND UP AND TAKE THAT PUNCH, AND WE'RE GOING ON FROM THERE... WE GOT OVER VIETNAM AND WATERGATE, AND WE'RE PROCEEDING AHEAD WITH OUR FUTURE...THE DAYS OF VIETNAM AND WATERGATE I HOPE ARE GONE FOREVER, AND THAT'S WHY I'M INVOLVED IN POLITICS NOW..."

EDITOR: THIS WILLINGNESS TO LOOK AHEAD SEEKS TO RUN THROUGH ALMOST ALL OF THE INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED BY NEWSWEEK -- ALONG WITH THE DESIRE TO HOPE -- AND WORK -- FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN AMERICAN SOCIETY. NOVELIST JOHN CHEEVER PERHAPS SAYS IT BEST IN HIS INTERVIEW.

VOICE: "THE YALE MAGAZINE WROTE ME AND ASKED IF I THOUGHT THINGS WERE GOING TO GET WORSE IN THE COUNTRY, AND I WROTE BACK THAT IF PEOPLE CONTINUE TO GO AROUND ASKING QUESTIONS LIKE THAT, THINGS ARE BOUND TO GET WORSE. THERE IS STILL A NEWNESS IN THIS COUNTRY, A FRESHNESS. WE ARE STILL EXPERIMENTING."

EDITOR: THE EXPERIMENTATION THAT HAS HELPED TO DEVELOP AMERICAN SOCIETY OVER THE PAST TWO HUNDRED YEARS IS -- IN THE EYES OF MANY SOCIAL SCIENTISTS-- ONE OF THE CHARACTERISTICS THAT HAS MADE THE COUNTRY STRONG. BUT THERE HAVE BEEN OTHER ASPECTS TO THE NATION'S DEVELOPMENT -- MOST NOTABLY

EDITOR: THE TREND, AS IN OTHER INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES, TOWARD A
(CONT) TECHNOLOGICALLY-ORIENTED SOCIETY AND CULTURE. THE PACE
OF LIFE HAS GRADUALLY INCREASED -- AND ACCORDING TO SOME
OF ITS OLDEST CITIZENS, THE UNITED STATES HAS LOST, AS A
RESULT, SOME OF THE WARMTH THAT IT ONCE HAD. SUCH VIEWS
WERE EXPRESSED BY MATTIE WHITE, A ONE-HUNDRED-YEAR-OLD
RESIDENT OF NORTHERN TEXAS.

VOICE: "THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN THOSE EARLY TIMES WAS MAKING
A LIVING. FOR AMUSEMENT -- WELL, EVERYBODY WENT TO CHURCH
SUNDAY MORNING, WHETHER YOU WANTED TO OR NOT. YOU HAD TO
HAVE A BATH AND PUT ON YOUR BEST CLOTHES. YOU COULDN'T
JUST GO -- YOU HAD TO DRESS UP A LITTLE. AND THEN IN THE
SUMMER YOU HAD CAMP MEETINGS. EVERYBODY PUT UP A TENT,
COMING ON FRIDAY AND STAYING ALL THE NEXT WEEK UNTIL THE
NEXT SUNDAY. THE PREACHERS (MINISTERS) CAME FROM ALL
AROUND THE COUNTRY, AND WE ALWAYS HAD SOMETHING GOOD TO
EAT BECAUSE THE WOMEN ALWAYS BROUGHT THEIR BEST FOOD TO
THE CAMP. THEY ALWAYS SAID THAT THE MEN CAME TO TRADE
CATTLE AND FARM INSTRUMENTS; THE WOMEN CAME TO TALK ABOUT
THEIR BABIES AND TRADE RECIPES; THE YOUNG PEOPLE CAME TO
COURT, AND THE CHILDREN CAME TO PLAY. AND THEY STAYED A WEEK
AND HAD THE BEST TIME EVER... IN THE EARLY DAYS, WE WERE
MORE OF A FRIEND TO EACH OTHER. THE THING IS NOW IN
AMERICA, EVERYBODY IS LOOKING OUT FOR HIMSELF. EVERYBODY
SEEMS TO BE LIVING OFF THE GOVERNMENT. I'M DOING IT, AND
ALL THE REST OF THE POOR PEOPLE LIKE ME ARE SNATCHING AND
GRABBING AND TELLING STORIES (LIES) TO GET MORE. BUT I

VOICE: (CONT) DON'T THINK THE COUNTRY'S IN A REAL BAD WAY. WE'VE HAD BAD DAYS AND GOOD DAYS BEFORE, AND I THINK WE'LL GO ON AND BE PROSPEROUS. WHAT'S THE POINT OF MOANING AND LOOKING BACK? LOOK FORWARD. WHY, JUST THINK OF THE THINGS THAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN IN THE NEXT HUNDRED YEARS. OH, I'D LOVE TO SEE IT."

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EDITOR: AS THE WORLD'S FOSSIL FUELS DIMINISH, AND OIL-PRODUCING COUNTRIES CONTINUE TO CHARGE HIGHER AND HIGHER PRICES FOR CRUDE OIL, ENERGY EXPERTS AND PLANNERS IN THE INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS ARE FOCUSSING ON ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES -- AMONG THEM, NUCLEAR POWER, OBTAINED FROM THE SPLITTING OF THE ATOM. IN A RECENT ARTICLE IN THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE, DON MEIGHAN WRITES ABOUT THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE SAFETY OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS, AND OUTLINES WHAT BOTH OPPONENTS AND SUPPORTERS OF THE NUCLEAR CONCEPT ARE SAYING. HE SAYS THAT WHILE MORE AND MORE NUCLEAR PLANTS ARE BEING BUILT IN THE UNITED STATES EVERY YEAR, OPPOSITION TO NUCLEAR POWER HAS HAD ITS EFFECT. MISTER MEIGHAN NOTES:

VOICE: "NUCLEAR ENERGY HAS COME UNDER STRONG, CONCERTED ATTACK FROM A BROAD ALLIANCE OF ENVIRONMENTALIST AND CITIZEN-ACTION GROUPS, AND WITH A BIT OF HELP FROM THE ECONOMY, THEY HAVE HAD SOME EFFECT. JUST A FEW YEARS AGO, FEDERAL ENERGY OFFICIALS TALKED OPTIMISTICALLY ABOUT ONE THOUSAND NUCLEAR PLANTS ON LINE (IN OPERATION) BY THE END OF THIS CENTURY, PROVIDING SLIGHTLY MORE THAN ONE-HALF OF THE NATION'S

VOICE: ELECTRICAL NEEDS. TODAY, THAT PROJECTION IS DOWN TO EIGHT HUNDRED PLANTS BY THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND, AND SOME EXPERTS -- PERHAPS OVERLY CONSCIOUS OF ENVIRONMENTALISTS' RESISTANCE, OF SLACKENING ELECTRICAL DEMAND AND OF THE INCREASED EMPHASIS BEING GIVEN TO ENERGY CONSERVATION, -- WOULD PUT THAT FIGURE AT ONLY FOUR HUNDRED PLANTS BY CENTURY'S END."

EDITOR: WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO CAUSE SUCH A SHARP DECLINE IN THE NUMBER OF NUCLEAR PLANTS PLANNED AND BUILT? WHY ARE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE SEEMINGLY TURNING THEIR BACKS IN INCREASING NUMBERS ON WHAT SEEMED ONLY A SHORT TIME AGO TO BE THE ANSWER TO THE NATION'S ENERGY PROBLEMS? MISTER MEIGHAN WRITES:

VOICE: "TO A LARGE EXTENT, IT IS A VICTIM OF THE TIMES: NUCLEAR POWER IS A NATURAL TARGET OF ENVIRONMENTALISTS, OF THOSE WHO ARE OPPOSED TO CONTINUED ECONOMIC GROWTH, THOSE WHO ARE SUSPICIOUS OF TECHNOLOGY, AND THOSE WHO HAVE LOST THEIR FAITH IN THE MORALITY AND COMPETENCE OF BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT LEADERS. IN THE MIND OF THE LARGER PUBLIC, HOWEVER, THE CONTROVERSY TENDS TO FOCUS ON THE SINGLE SALIENT ISSUE...OF SAFETY."

EDITOR: MISTER MEIGHAN WRITES THAT DURING THE OPERATION OF ALL OF THE SIXTY NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS NOW SUPPLYING ELECTRICITY TO COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE UNITED STATES, NOT ONE HAS EVER CAUSED THE DEATH OF A SINGLE PERSON. BUT, HE ADDS, THERE HAVE IN RECENT YEARS BEEN A NUMBER OF ACCIDENTS AT SOME OF THOSE PLANTS -- A FEW OF THE ACCIDENTS RATHER SPECTACULAR

EDITOR: -- AND HE SAYS THAT BECAUSE OF THE ENERGY RELEASED IN THE
(CONT) NUCLEAR FISSION PROCESS ITSELF, THE POTENTIAL FOR DISASTER
LOOMS LARGE IN THE MINDS OF MANY PEOPLE. TO GET A BETTER
IDEA OF JUST HOW SEVERE SUCH DISASTERS COULD BE, MISTER
MEIGHAN QUOTES A STUDY PERFORMED RECENTLY BY MORE THAN ONE
HUNDRED SPECIALISTS. HE WRITES:

VOICE: "THE STUDY TEAM CAME UP WITH A RANGE OF ACCIDENTS VARYING
IN BOTH THE PROBABILITY OF THEIR OCCURRING AND IN THE
SEVERITY OF THEIR CONSEQUENCES, SHOULD THEY HAPPEN. AT ONE
END, THE STUDY ESTIMATED THAT AN ACCIDENT WITH A ONE-IN-A-
MILLION CHANCE OF HAPPENING AT ANY ONE PLANT IN ANY ONE
YEAR WOULD KILL SEVENTY PEOPLE, (MOSTLY PLANT PERSONNEL,) CAUSE ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY CASES OF ACUTE RADIATION
SICKNESS, AND DAMAGE TO THE EXTENT OF TWO THOUSAND SEVEN
HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS... THE WORST POSSIBLE ACCIDENT,
ACCORDING TO THE STUDY, WOULD BE A ONE-THOUSAND-MILLION-TO-
ONE SHOT THAT WOULD TAKE THREE THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED LIVES,
SERIOUSLY SICKEN FORTY-FIVE THOUSAND OTHERS, AND DAMAGE
PROPERTY TO THE EXTENT OF FOURTEEN THOUSAND MILLION
DOLLARS."

EDITOR: DESPITE THE OBVIOUSLY CATASTROPHIC NATURE OF THE WORST OF
SUCH ACCIDENTS, MISTER MEIGHAN NOTES THAT THE CHANCES OF
SUCH OCCURRENCES ARE SO REMOTE AS TO BE ALMOST UNLIKELY --
AND HE CONCLUDED THAT WHILE THERE ARE RISKS IN NUCLEAR
POWER, THERE IS NO REAL AND PRESENT DANGER, NO ABSOLUTE
THREAT OF HARM -- SO CERTAINTY THAT DISASTER MUST COME

EDITOR: AS THE INEVITABLE RESULT OF CONSTRUCTION OF NUCLEAR
(CONT) POWER PLANTS. REGARDING THIS QUESTION OF SAFETY,
MISTER MEIGHAN CONCLUDES:

VOICE: "WHAT IT COMES DOWN TO FINALLY IS THIS: ARE THE BENEFITS ACCRUING FROM NUCLEAR POWER WORTH THE RISKS? UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PHYSICIST JOHN HOLDREN HAS WRITTEN IN THE BULLETIN OF THE ATOMIC SCIENTISTS, 'THE PUBLIC POLICY QUESTION IN THE NUCLEAR CONTROVERSY -- HOW TO DEAL WITH A SITUATION CHARACTERIZED BY UNCERTAINTIES OF THESE KINDS AND IN THESE DEGREES-- IS NOT A TECHNICAL ISSUE, BUT A SOCIAL ONE. WHAT KIND OF RISKS SHOULD BE ACCEPTED IN EXCHANGE FOR WHAT KINDS OF BENEFITS? WITH HOW MUCH UNCERTAINTY, OF SPECIFIC KINDS, DOES THE PUBLIC CARE TO

LIVE?" (MISTER MEIGHAN CONTINUES:) "WHERE IS THE NATION'S

ENERGY TO COME FROM IN THE FUTURE? OIL, FOR SO LONG A STAPLE, IS FAST DISAPPEARING FROM THE EARTH AND, IN ANY EVENT, IS INCREASINGLY UNDER THE CONTROL OF OTHER NATIONS.

COAL IS PLENTIFUL (SOME ESTIMATES PUT THE UNITED STATES RESERVES AT MORE THAN FIVE HUNDRED YEARS WORTH) BUT ITS IMPACT IN TERMS OF STRIP-MINING AND POLLUTION IS CONSIDERABLE. SOLAR POWER AND THERMONUCLEAR FUSION, BOTH INVARIABLY DESCRIBED AS INEXHAUSTIBLE ENERGY SOURCES, ARE STILL FAR FROM BECOMING WORKADAY REALITIES. AND SO,

FOR THE TIME BEING, PERHAPS UNTIL SOLAR AND FUSION SYSTEMS ARE BROUGHT TO A STATE OF READINESS, IT WOULD SEEM THAT THE ONLY ENERGY SOURCE AVAILABLE TO THE NATION IS NUCLEAR FISSION, WARTS AND ALL (WITH ALL ITS PROBLEMS).

VOICE: ITS TECHNOLOGY IS COMPLEX, BUT THEN SO IS CONTEMPORARY
(CONT) SOCIETY. IT DOES ENTAIL SOME ELEMENT OF RISK, BUT THEN SO DOES ALMOST EVERY FACET OF MODERN LIFE. IT SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN LIGHTLY, BECAUSE THERE IS AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF ENERGY CONTAINED WITHIN THE SPLITTING ATOM -- BUT NEITHER SHOULD IT BE RULED OUT, FOR PRECISELY THE SAME REASON."

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ANNCR: YOU'VE BEEN LISTENING TO FROM THE MAGAZINE RACK, TIMELY TOPICS FROM PERIODICALS PUBLISHED IN THE UNITED STATES. JOIN US AGAIN NEXT -----, FOR MORE SELECTIONS FROM THE MAGAZINE RACK. THIS IS -----.

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WJL/RTD/PY